



From the Executive Director

Welcome to the 2021 *State of the Association*. I thought I'd be handing copies out at our in-person conference this year but ... you know the rest. Expectations are a funny thing. I can't think of a time in my life that has upended as many expectations as the last 18 months have. And not always in bad ways.

If you had told me in January 2020 that we'd soon be facing a deadly virus that was continuing to effect our daily lives 18 months later, there is no way I would have believed it. Even more astonishing is how Indiana's child and family welfare community has responded. In that time, we've kept services open and available in every corner of the state. We've found new ways to work together and with Hoosier children and families. We've upended a lot of what we knew about how to do our work and reaffirmed our deep commitment to the safety and wellbeing of people in all 92 counties.

We've seen agencies launch new programs and rethink how they were approaching existing ones. We've started (renewed?) conversations about reimagining foster care and breaking out of service silos. And, we've increased communication throughout the membership, with our friends at DCS, and our partners statewide.

None of this should overshadow the immense loss that COVID-19 has brought too. As I write this, more than 650,000 people have died in the United States alone. People have lost businesses and missed out on gatherings mundane and once-in-a-lifetime. And, we're experiencing one of the most challenging workforce shortages in anyone's memory.

Yet, despite the challenges and the loss, you've continued to believe in children and families. Their ability to stay together safely, come back together after separation, or start over when necessary. And you've believed in yourselves and your colleagues and your ability to keep making a difference during a very, very different time. It's important that we don't forget that.

All the best,
Chris Daley

Association Financials

IARCA's financial position continues to be solid. The IARCA Board of Directors approved a 2021 budget of just under \$720,000. This was a significant drop from 2020's budget due to a staffing change and expectations of a reduction in some expenses.

To date, we have realized 90% of projected income for the year. During the same period we have only hit 56% of projected expenses—largely due to the cancellation of the in-person conference. As a result, we are in a good financial position.

The IARCA Institute for Excellence is also financially healthy. Continued participation in the Institute's training program and our current Lilly Endowment grant have allowed us to maintain an active training calendar and add a variety of webinars throughout the year. The Institute also received an additional grant to support our first Excellence Fellow (more details on p. 2).

IARCA Membership 2020

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, IARCA's membership holds steady. As of September 1, 2021, we have:

Full Members: 86

Affiliate Members: 14

Associate members: 6

Total Members: 106

Advocacy

- In the 2021 legislative session, IARCA successfully supported an increase in home-based rates and a bill codifying remote services as one tool that child and family welfare agencies can use to support in-person delivery of services. We were not successful in getting the non-profit operating margin restored for residential and foster care agencies; but we continue to advocate for its return.
- IARCA has been working with our colleagues in other states and at the national level to make sure that youth receiving services in a federally defined Qualified Residential Treatment Program do not lose their Medicaid coverage because of a conflict with the federal definition of an Institution for Mental Disease. At its heart, this is an issue of one branch of the federal government not coordinating with another. Unfortunately, the consequences of youth losing Medicaid coverage would be significant. IARCA has been working alongside DCS to raise awareness of this issue with our colleagues at Family and Social Services Administration and the Governor's office. We've also been working with Indiana's Congressional delegation. A bill that would fix the problem has been introduced but it's path to becoming law is still uncertain.

Practice Advancement

- IARCA is participating in the Reimaging Foster Care Work Group. The Group is focused on building better connections between parents and the foster or kinship parents caring for their child or children. The Group has completed its research and produced a Statement of Principles and Action that we'll be circulating before the end of the year to encourage public and private agencies to sign on. In order to support the work, the Group will be producing a webinar in October. IARCA is producing a short video featuring parents and foster parents who shared parenting of a child as examples of how these relationships can work. The video will premiere at the webinar.
- IARCA also worked with DCS to produce a video on Family Preservation practice. IARCA member agencies and DCS staff discussed how Family Preservation has been successful over the last year and how increased collaboration can result in even better outcomes for children and families. IARCA is excited to work on more collaborative training projects like this with DCS in the coming months.

IARCA Institute Excellence Fellow

Thanks to support from Lilly Endowment, the IARCA Institute named Takkeem Morgan as our first Excellence Fellow. The Excellence Fellowship is a one-year fellowship to support emerging leaders in the child and family welfare community who have new ideas or want to take their existing ideas to the next level. Fellows receive financial and institutional support on their work. At the end of the year, the Fellow may launch their own initiative or take their work to public or private agency.

Takkeem, who has an MBA, worked in corporate marketing and brand building before becoming a Foster America Fellow in 2020. He is the founder of Foster Together Indiana and the lead on a Lake County pilot project with Hands of Hope that IARCA is supporting. The pilot project provides LCPAs working in the county with expert support on using digital media and data collection to increase recruitment and support of foster families. The pilot also includes working with local churches on building care communities who can support individual foster families in a variety of ways.

During his fellowship, Takkeem will continue working on the pilot project, research the outcomes for the agencies who participated, present his findings to the broader community, and explore additional partners who may be willing to create care communities - such as corporations and civic groups.

Workforce and Leadership Development Project

IARCA's Workforce and Leadership development projects are up and running and going great. Through this work, IARCA has developed some new partnerships and programming to strengthen the pool of potential applicants and provide agency leaders support in keeping their organizations strong and well resourced.

The IARCA Institute has developed a *Child and Family Welfare Worker Certificate* course that has been approved by Indiana's Department of Workforce Development as an industry certification. The curriculum for the certificate was drafted in conjunction with Washington Township's Adult Education program and IARCA members. Children's Bureau/Families First staff, who are faculty for the first certificate course, then finalized the curriculum. The course is 30-hours and is taught virtually two nights a week over eight weeks.

Students in the course will learn about the child and family welfare community, child development, trauma, effective communication, boundary setting, report writing, and CPR/first aid. At the conclusion of the course, they will be better prepared to succeed in a career in child and family welfare and the Institute will help them connect with open positions in their area. The Institute expects to expand beyond our pilot program in 2022.

We are also deep into three cohorts of our Executive Learning Circles program. Presented in partnership with Indiana University's O'Neill School Executive Education, the Learning Circles bring together IARCA member agency leaders with O'Neill faculty to dig into specific aspects of running a child and family welfare agency. We currently have thirty participants divided up into three cohorts: small agency, midcareer, and leaders of color.

The circles each meet monthly virtually for two hours to go learn about and discuss a specific topic. The cohorts themselves choose four of the eight topics. Some of the topics currently being covered include: leadership team effectiveness, implementing executive decisions, staff recruiting and retention, creating effective collaborations, transforming agency culture, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The Institute and O'Neill School will offer two more Executive Learning Circle cohorts in 2022. Look for an opportunity to apply starting in October.

Outcomes Project

In 2020, the IARCA Institute's Outcomes Project underwent a major revision of our core assessment tools. That project resulted in a stronger tool for Project participants through the incorporation of the North Carolina Family Assessment Scales, an evidence based assessment tool.

We have also begun to analyze data differently. In the past, we analyzed intakes and discharges from a given year regardless of whether those events were for the same child. Now, we are analyzing data by comparing the same child and intake and discharge (and eventually follow-up). These changes will result in data collection and analysis that better corresponds to modern data expectations.

Of course, a change this big has come with some technology complications. IARCA staff continue to work through these with our vendor. We appreciate everyone's patience.

Training Project

As recommended by the Institute Board, our training seminars were presented in a virtual format this year. The Board appreciated the greater flexibility for agency staff and elimination of travel time that this format offers.

IARCA's training partners have worked hard to make sure their seminars work well in a virtual environment. With their help, we were able to again present a educational opportunities on trauma informed services, the practice of Motivational Interviewing, and racial justice conscious services. We are looking forward to bringing back some of our additional workshops in 2022 as some of our long-standing partners develop virtual versions of their existing seminars.



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